White, the colour of flowers

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White, the colour of flowers

by lumosatnight

Summary

The first ending of our story goes like this.

Draco is anxious, overwhelmed, and scared of his own shadow. He does not tell anyone about the flowers. The flowers tearing his lungs to shreds, the vines climbing up his throat, the heart that beats wildly in his chest whenever a certain Gryffindor sneers at him in the halls.

Draco tells no one, and that is his first mistake.

Notes

For the HP Flowers prompt *daffodil* (narcissus)—a symbol of unrequited love, rebirth, hope, and new beginnings. And also for the Microfic May prompt *remember* (even though it's not really a microfic). Thank you Orange_Coyote and ordinarylittleme for the beta! This fic is for sugareey as a thank you for planning this amazing flower-themed fest! I would never have had the motivation to finish this story without it.

This story now has a podfic which you can find here recorded by the amazing ETL Echo team. The super-talented Anaxandria also made an absolutely gorgeous fandbinding which you can find here. Go check them out!

▶ **Info about Hanahaki Disease. Click to expand.**

See the end of the work for more notes

❀

White,
the colour of flowers.
Sweet and subtle.
Soft and sincere.

Threaded through a loose braid.
A narrow vase on a windowsill.
Ruffling in a forest breeze.

Rough stems
scratching and pulling.
Drops of blood
spiralling out of control.

Eventually there is
no
white
anymore.

White,
the colour of silence.

❀

Our story begins in the middle of Draco's sixth lonely year.

Everything is white.

White shirt soaked through with sweat. White hands clenching at white porcelain. White memories, forceful and sure, flooding Draco's every waking moment.

White petals dripping in red swirling down the drain. White noise following a green curse, green stems, and green eyes.

Always white, but always *more.* White and red, white and green. One melting into the other, melding into each other, until they share the same breath, the same heat.

Nothing is pure. Nothing is right.

❀

The first ending of our story goes like this.

Draco is anxious, overwhelmed, and scared of his own shadow.

He does not tell anyone about the flowers. The flowers tearing his lungs to shreds, the vines climbing up his throat, the heart that beats wildly in his chest whenever a certain Gryffindor sneers at him in the halls.

Draco does not tell a single living soul.

The ghosts are another matter entirely.

"What can I do? How can I help you?" Myrtle wails above him, watches listlessly as Draco coughs petal after petal into the basin below. She reaches a hand out, agonisingly close. It passes straight through.

"Nothing." Draco gasps, cries, clutches at his lungs. Tries to breathe through the terror and the pain. "You can do nothing. No one can help me."

He knows this is true. He is utterly and completely alone in his task, in his penance.

"I can't… I won't… He'll kill me… He'll kill my family."

Because he will. Draco's seen him do it, seen bodies hanging from the ceiling in the dining room, seen blood running across the drawing room floor.

The threat of failure looms above him, the bloody blade of the guillotine waiting to fall.

So, Draco tells no one.

Even when Potter barges in, slashes his insides apart, rips his life to shreds.

Even when Snape carries him in his arms, gives him a calculating stare over the white hospital bed.

Draco tells no one, and that is his first mistake.

❀

"I don't know," Draco says.

But he does know.

Just like he knows the grass is green and a ruby is red, he knows this beaten-up boy with the swollen face is Harry Potter. His heart knows. It beats so fiercely, Draco is afraid his Aunt Bellatrix will hear.

Mother sneaks him a considering glance. Maybe she also knows.

But then, Potter is whisked downstairs, and Draco looks away as his aunt commits another horrible act of war.

Granger's screams ring in his ears long into the night and the next day.

The parlour may be empty, the cellar reduced to a cold lifeless room, but Draco's heart continues to beat frantically, like it knows there are only so many beats left.

And still, Draco tells no one.

❀

The burn on his forearm is excruciating, but nothing can surpass the fire in his lungs.

He wanders around the grounds of the manor, stumbling into trees and tripping over roots. It's been many months since the gardens were kept. Vines creep along the path, strangle the earth in an unrelenting grip.

They strangle Draco as well, but he does not complain.

Not anymore.

A figure blocks his path, gruesome and grey.

“Well, well, well.” Greyback leers, teeth sharp as glinting knives. The beast and the man are one and the same. “What’s the little Malfoy heir doing out all alone? Didn’t want to join the fray? Too scared to face your old friends? I’ll say hello to them for you. I’m sure they’ll be *thrilled* to see me. Especially Potter. I’ll rip him apart piece by piece. I’ll even bring a piece back for you. You’d like that, wouldn’t you?”

He throws his head back and howls, though there is no moon in sight.

Electricity crackles down Draco’s spine. He opens his mouth for the first time in weeks, pushes past a throat full of leaves, raises a borrowed wand, and says two words.

Then, there is only *green green green.* Greyback’s body slumps to the ground, unbreathing, unmoving.

Not anymore.

Shudders rack Draco’s body, ready to take him. White hot pain rushes to his head and makes him sway. He collapses on the grassy floor, closes his eyes, and does not open them again.

Not anymore.

Many, many miles away, spells clash in a battle of light. A boy with green eyes and a lightning bolt scar walks to his death then walks away.

The aftermath is terrible, horrible, the start of something new.

The Great Hall is transformed into a bed of blood and regret. Lavender Brown clutches her best friend’s hand, her blonde curls the curliest they’ve even been—full of misery and loss and life. The Weasleys huddle by a body on the ground, Arthur setting a devastated hand on Molly’s shoulder. Severus Snape lays abandoned in a shack, dark eyes unseeing, lungs still.

“You could have saved him.” A ghost and a saviour lean against a deserted wall.

“I tried.” Green eyes close, open, stare off into the vague future.

“No, you didn’t.”

He frowns, tired lines on his face sloping down. “He wasn’t mine to save.”

“But what if he was?”

❀

The Earth continues to turn. The flowers continue to bloom.

A happy family of five approaches the giant red train on Platform Nine and Three-Quarters.

The eldest runs ahead, shaggy head disappearing into the throng of students. The middle lingers a while longer at his mother’s side. The youngest looks on longingly. Only a few more years, she thinks with excitement.

A furtive glance down the platform, through the billows of steam, through the new generation of families born anew.

The platform is empty.

Harry feels a pang in his heart. He doesn't know why.

❀

What if that was not the end?

Flip back to the beginning. Reink the quill. Rewrite the page.

Would that be enough to forget? Would that be enough to remember?

❀

White,
the colour of innocence.
Innocence is purity,
is love,
is light.

Innocence is not a virtue.
It is oblivion.

It is the burden of youth,
of a life unlived.
It is the promise
of suffering to come.

❀

The second ending of our story goes like this.

Draco is anxious, overwhelmed, and scared of the creatures that lurk in the dark.

Potter leaves him raw and bleeding, sliced through the heart, and ripped beyond repair.

Snape carries him in his arms, gives him a calculating stare over the white hospital bed.

"What happened?" he says.

Draco opens his mouth, closes it again.

"I can't…" he starts to say, but Snape will not tolerate excuses, can only fix the problem when he knows what there is to fix.

"Tell me," demands Snape, so Draco does.

That is his first mistake.

❀

The procedure is not as simple as it seems.

Pull out the root, and the whole weed will die. Remove too little, and the bud remains, ready to sprout again. Remove too much, and all that is left is an empty shell where no life will grow at all.

“Can’t we just Obliviate him?” Mother paces across the study. Father is away. They decided not to tell him.

Snape shakes his head, the dim candlelight making his sallow face look even more pale. “He needs to *remember.”*

“But he also needs to *forget,”* Mother says, voice sharp as a Basilisk fang and just as venomous.

Draco leans against the door, listening in as they determine his fate.

“Then he’ll do both,” says Snape, black cloak billowing out as he whips around, wand held high.

That is the last thing Draco sees before he passes out, a scarred, white hand cradling him as he falls.

❀

“I don’t know,” Draco says.

Because he truly does not know.

He doesn’t know the beaten-up boy with the swollen face. It could be Harry Potter, it could be his traitorous house elf, it could be his Great Uncle Alastar for all Draco can tell the difference.

Harry Potter is a myth, a dream shrouded in mist, a white wisp of a memory so blurry it hurts his head just to think about. Harry Potter is a boy who Draco went to school with and mostly ignored, an ordinary boy who Draco passed by in the halls without a second glance.

So why should Draco know his face now?

Draco shrugs his thin shoulders and retreats to stand beside Mother. He presses a hand to his chest where his heart is beating wildly, like a caged animal aching to escape.

Green eyes crinkle in confusion and relief. And they’re so *green green green.*

But then, the prisoners are whisked downstairs, and Draco looks away as his aunt commits another sadistic act of violence.

When the parlour is empty, the cellar reduced to a cold lifeless room, Draco's heart continues to beat frantically—searching, *yearning.*

But yearning for what or for who?

❀

"Take my hand, Malfoy."

The flames are closing in around them. Vince is already gone. Greg is well on his way too.

Draco takes the hand, the spark of electricity running through him almost as hot as the fiendfyre blocking their path.

They swoop and dive, past dragons made of red and lions made of gold. They land in the hallway, panting and breathless, falling off the broom and straight onto the floor.

Draco's heart is doing cartwheels in his chest. His hand still burns from where the boy touched him.

"Well… uh… see you, Malfoy."

Draco stares after them as they leave, his heart straining against his ribcage. It isn't an uncomfortable feeling, but not entirely pleasant either. He is so preoccupied by his beating heart that he stumbles into another body not long after, knocking them both off course.

The wall explodes behind them, crumbling to the ground in a heap of dangerous stone. He's walked straight into the middle of a duel.

"FRED! FRED! ARE YOU OKAY?"

Running footsteps. Ginger-haired soldiers coming into view.

"Yeah… I'm…" A hand settles on Draco's shoulder. "Um, I think Malfoy just saved me."

"Wow," someone says.

The aftermath is gruesome, monstrous, the infallible promise of a new beginning.

The Great Hall is transformed into a bed of blood and torment. Parvati Patil clutches her best friend's hand, weeps into Lavender's cold and lifeless curls that settle into the ground like so many others. The Weasleys huddle amongst themselves—always touching, never letting go—uncomprehendingly grateful that none of them were lost too. Severus Snape lays abandoned in a shack, his many secrets fading away just like the light in his dark eyes, but his memories will live on.

"Did you tell him?" A ghost and a Death Eater lean against a deserted wall.

"Tell who?"

“You know…” She trails off.

“No, I don’t know.”

The ghost gives him a questioning stare, finds something missing in those grey eyes.

“Not anymore,” she says and floats away.

❀

The Earth continues to turn. The flowers continue to bloom.

A happy family of five approaches the giant red train on Platform Nine and Three-Quarters.

The eldest runs off in search of mischief and finds him snogging one of his cousins. The middle pulls his father aside (“What if I end up in Slytherin?” he says). The youngest bounces on the trolley, excited for her own adventures in a few years time.

A furtive glance down the platform, through the billows of steam, through the years and years worth of memories born anew.

Malfoy stands with his wife, tall and proud, his blonde son at his side.

Harry wants to approach him, but he doesn’t know why.

He gives Malfoy a short nod instead. Malfoy looks away.

❀

White,
the colour of snow.
All fluffy flakes and soft touches
until the weight crushes you whole.
Cold and alone
burying you in crystal and ice.

But maybe you are not alone.
A shovel and a helping hand
can unbury you again.

❀

The third ending of our story goes like this.

Draco is anxious, overwhelmed, and scared of factors he cannot control.

But he is also angry. At his hands that shake against the white sink, at his father for setting him an impossible task, at his own heart that has betrayed him in the worst possible way.

When Potter barges in, wand raised and eyes feral, Draco attacks first. The struggle is vicious and blinding.

"Sectumsempra!" Potter yells, and Draco dodges just in time.

Draco sends a tripping hex back. Potter lets out a strangled shout as he falls.

Draco kicks his wand aside and towers above him. He wants to slash his insides apart, rip his life to shreds, dig his nails into his chest and pull his heart out by a string. Because that's what Potter would do, isn't it?

But Draco never gets the chance.

A racking cough overtakes him as he struggles towards the sink, the flowers crawling up his throat and demanding their release. He coughs and coughs, until his throat is scratched and raw, tears running down his face.

"What's happening to you?" Potter clambers off the floor. He doesn't even reach for his wand.

Stupid Gryffindors and their stupid bravery.

Draco meets green eyes in the mirror.

"You," he says, and then another cough rattles his frame.

❀

They come to an agreement.

It is tentative and new, as fresh as the morning dew and as delicate as a folded origami crane.

When they pass each other in the hallway between classes, Draco shoves Potter aside.

"Oi, watch where you're going, Malfoy."

"You were in my way, Potter."

Everyone notices the hostility, the flashing eyes, the tense shoulders hankering for a fight.

No one notices the fleeting touches, hands brushed against wrists, brief contact of skin on skin. No one notices the way Draco shudders as warmth curls up his arm. No one notices the way Potter blushes, the golden brown skin of his neck going a glowing crimson.

It isn't perfect, and it isn't ideal, but it works.

With Potter's small constant touches, Draco coughs less and less, until he is hardly coughing at all.

But the white flowers stay lodged in his lungs, swirling and unfurling. Draco can still feel them, waiting in the cavernous spaces, biding their time. The stems wait at the base of his throat, barely there but there still the same.

The only cure, afterall, is for Potter to love him back.

Which is not really a cure at all.

❀

“I don’t know,” Draco says.

But he does know.

Just like he knows the feel of Potter’s hand and the exact texture of his unruly hair, he knows this beaten-up boy with the swollen face is Harry Potter. But Potter is not his to keep, not his to hold.

Not anymore.

Mother sneaks him a considering glance. He turns to meet her stare, unblinking.

But then, Potter is whisked downstairs, and Draco looks away as his aunt commits another unforgivable act of greed.

He retreats to his room where he coughs until his throat goes numb and his vision blurs with pain. He coughs up flower after flower, white after white, confession after confession.

Because he needs Potter—needs him like the tide needs the moon, like a flower needs the sun. Stretching towards him, seeking his light—closer and closer, but never close enough.

Draco needs him, and Draco let him go.

❀

“Take my hand, Malfoy.”

The flames are closing in around them. Vince is already gone. Greg is well on his way too.

“You came back for me,” Draco says, taking the hand.

“Of course I did.”

The spark of electricity running between them is almost as hot as the fiendfyre blocking their path.

“Come with me,” he says when they are sprawled out in the corridor, the heat and the flames safely tucked away behind closed doors.

“Why?” says Draco.

“I need you.”

Hope blossoms in Draco’s lungs, every last daffodil expelling themselves in one single gasp, the stems and all. They’re all so green. *Green green green.* Green like the curse that started everything. Green like Potter’s eyes looking at him now.

Draco coughs one last time. The roots fall into his palm.

Pull out the root, and the whole weed will die.

Draco is finally free.

Because, because, because…

Potter loves him back.

Harry loves him whole.

They end up in the Shrieking Shack—planning, scheming, kissing, hiding. Harry wants to fight; Draco does not want to let him go.

Not again, not anymore.

They stay quiet when unwanted visitors enter the shack. They stay quiet when a slippery voice demands Harry’s life as a sacrifice. They stay quiet when Nagini detaches her jaw and sinks her villainous fangs into Snape’s neck.

Draco stays behind, tends to Snape’s wounds.

“I need to find Ron and Hermione,” Harry says and kisses Draco before he leaves. He doesn’t say where he is actually going, to the middle of the forest, to meet the enemy in the centre of the snake pit.

Harry Potter, a boy with green eyes and a lightning bolt scar and the keeper of Draco’s heart, walks to his death then walks away.

The aftermath is excruciating, unbearable, the silver lining amongst a storm-cast sky.

The Great Hall is transformed into a bed of blood and sacrifice. Parvati Patil cries into her sister’s shoulder, mourning her best friend, long gone and joining the sea of wandering spirits. The Weasleys huddle by a body on the ground, red hair just as vibrant in death as it was in life. Severus Snape, barely conscious and in an indeterminate amount of pain, surveys the scene with dark, keen eyes.

“Now what?” A saviour and a Death Eater lean against a deserted wall.

“Now…” Draco brushes the back of Harry’s hand. “We do whatever we want.”

A ghost floats by, glances in their direction, and smiles.

Draco tilts his head to the side—in acknowledgement, in gratitude, in relief. The ghost floats away.

Now… is only the beginning.

❀

The Earth continues to turn. The flowers continue to bloom.

A happy family approaches the giant red train on Platform Nine and Three-Quarters.

The oldest pushes his cart forward, shaggy hair bobbing with each nervous step. The youngest clings to her father's robes, eyes brimming with excitement at all the new sights to behold.

A furtive glance down the platform, through the billows of steam, through the layers of life, of hope born anew.

Draco strolls through the crowd, tall and proud, finally reaching them in a swirl of opulent robes.

"Sorry I'm late," he says, bending down and planting a kiss on Harry's head, right above the scar, still vivid after all these years.

"You're just in time," Harry replies.

❀

White,
the colour of forgiveness,
the colour of death,
the colour of life.

White,
the colour of renewal.
A blank slate,
where everything
can start anew.

White,
the colour of possibility.

❀

End Notes

Come say hi on Tumblr @lumosatnight!

Works inspired by this one

[Restricted Work] by Cailynwrites, ETL_Echo_Audiobooks

[Restricted Work] by Anaxandria

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